

Wily Wycombe

turn on the style

BORO'S PLAYERS received the shock of their lives when they inspected the Wycombe Wanderers' pitch an hour before the kick-off today. They had been told there was a slope, but they weren't prepared for the severity of the 11-foot drop from one side to the other. It shook them to the core.

For this FA Cup third round tie Boro had Peter Brine at outside right in place of the suspended Bobby Murdoch, with Alan Willey named substitute before the start.

Wycombe fielded a full-strength side after their shock away victory over Third Division Bournemouth in a second round replay.

TEAMS

WYCOMBE WANDERERS
JOHN MASKELL
PAUL BIRDSEYE
GARY HAND
KEITH MEAD
ALAN PHILLIPS
TERRY REARDON
STEVE PERRIN
HOWARD KENNEDY
KEITH SEARLE
MICK HOLLIFIELD
TONY HORSEMAN
Sub: Dylan Evans

MIDDLESBROUGH
JIM PLATT
JOHN CRAGGS
FRANK SPRAGGON
GRAEME SOUNESS
STUART BOAM
WILLIE MADDREN
PETER BRINE
JOHN HICKTON
DAVID MILLS
ALAN FOGGON
DAVID ARMSTRONG
Sub: Alan Willey
Referee: Mr. A. Porter (Bolton)

For the first-ever visit of a Division One team for a competitive fixture, an all-ticket crowd descended on a compact ground and the excitement began to build long before the kick-off. About 1,500 Boro fans had made the trip though, and they gave their side a tremendous roar as Stuart Boam led them on to the field.

But the big welcome was for the Isthmian League heroes whose manager gave them no chance at the start, but who were obviously going all out for the shock of the round, in fact the shock of the season.

Quick corner

John Craggs whipped the ball back to his goalkeeper right from the start obviously to give Jim Platt an early touch. But then Boro tore into the attack, aiming for a quick goal.

They won a corner in the third minute but Spraggon's low centre was easily cleared.

Wycombe took up the running, Maddren coolly flipping the ball back to Platt. Wanderers kept up the attack, Birdseye putting in a snap shot that went wide. Another pass back to Platt brought jeers from the crowd.

Boam was happy to slide the ball into touch to prevent Hollifield breaking to the left. The part-timers were looking very useful at this

stage. Boro had not settled down, and the crowd roared Wanderers on to all-out effort.

Wycombe were chasing every ball and winning quite a few. One promising Boro move ended in a decisive and successful tackle on Armstrong by Birdseye.

In the early stages Boro were inclined to be a shade hurried in their work. Boam made one timely clearance that led to an attack, Souness found Brine on the right but the through ball was cut out.

Slope wins

Armstrong's speed took him through on the left but the slope beat him, the ball sliding over the line.

A centre by Foggon was stabbed away for a corner, Maskell going high to collect Spraggon's flag kick.

Then Mills broke well on the left and centred, Foggon being unable to make clean contact with the ball.

When Maddren shielded the ball over the line the referee awarded a corner instead of a goal kick, and Platt did well under pressure to punch clear.

Foggon drive

Spraggon conceded a free-kick for leaning on Perrin but this was wasted. Some neat footwork by Hollifield got Wanderers out of trouble but Boro kept up the attack, Maskell saving a low drive from Foggon.

Surviving a brief spell of Boro pressure Wycombe came again, Maddren hammering the ball away to stop Horseman breaking through.

Wycombe kept up the good work, Kennedy shooting over the top with a first-time drive as he followed up an attack.

Boam blocked a shot by Reardon in a sharp Wycombe attack. The off-side flag went up as Perrin raced through the middle and from the free-kick Boro staged a swift raid that brought them a corner, Maskell collecting Armstrong's centre.

A tackle from behind by Hickton brought a free-kick. This was cleared—but those battling Wycombe lads came again, Craggs clearing.

Maddren gave away a free-kick for a tackle, Platt collecting safely.

Boro's best chance came in a swift break by Mills and Foggon. From the final centre Brine put in a fierce shot that lifted over the bar. It could so easily have been the first vital goal.

Credit has to go to the



by

Cliff Mitchell

part-timers. They were still contesting every ball and every kick on the ground. Boro were not being allowed to settle into their stride, though they were still giving a disappointing display so far.

As the half-time whistle blew the crowd roared its delight at the situation and with good reason.

Half-time:

WYCOMBE 0, BORO 0

A well-judged tackle by Mead put paid to an early break by Armstrong and Foggon. From the clearance Wycombe broke on the right, and from Hollifield's centre Perrin stabbed the ball just wide.

Boro hit back to win a corner, but an alert Wycombe rearguard covered up well. Then these fighting Wanderers came again, Kennedy putting in a strong first-time drive that flashed wide.

Boro began to come into the picture more as an attacking force but they continued to find it difficult to carve out any openings. Brine centred behind to end a right-wing raid on a disappointing note.

Quick break

Smart tackling by Maddren on Perrin ended a dangerous move. The Isthmian League men continued to have more of the play.

One good move by Mills ended in his crossing the ball too near to the opposing goalkeeper.

Back came the Wanderers to win a free-kick for obstruction out on the left. This was cleared and led to a lightning break by Armstrong and Mills. It came to nothing and Wycombe delighted their fans with a smart attack that yielded a corner. Kennedy centred behind.

A foul on Mills by Phillips just inside the Wycombe half brought a free-kick that the non-league men cleared without any trouble.

Birdseye intercepted a pass which Spraggon intended for Armstrong, to put Wycombe on the attack

again. The crowd were shouting "Easy, easy" as Boro were forced back on to the defensive for a spell.

Souness brought down Reardon to give away a free-kick. This was headed clear. When Reardon leaned on Foggon the free-kick was wasted, and Boro continued to struggle. They just could not put their game together at all today.

A break by Hickton was stopped by Mead after Wanderers came again, Boam heading away.

Spraggon conceded a free kick for a tackle on Perrin, and when the ball was lobbed into the goalmouth Phillips sent a fierce header just wide. Boam appealed for an infringement, but I fancy a goal would have stood if the ball had gone in.

Maddren flashed the ball into touch and Foggon hammered the throw in anywhere to safety as Boro were pressed back.

Wycombe forced a corner, Platt being fouled when the ball came across.

'Rubbish'

Spraggon and Maddren sparked a Boro attack but it fizzled out as tamely as the rest.

Boro were utterly unable to show any poise or craft and when Craggs blasted the ball over the stand there were cries of "What a lot of rubbish."

With ten minutes to go Alan Willey took over as substitute for Foggon—a striker for a striker.

A fierce shot by Souness was blocked and from the rebound Craggs sliced his effort wide.

Five minutes from the end Hickton sent a long ball up the centre. Maskell misjudged it as Willey moved in but a defender hammered it away.

With just two minutes to go Wycombe substitute Evans went on in place of Horseman, but it was too late to make any difference to the result and the home heroes were cheered when the final whistle went.

Result:
WYCOMBE WAN. . . 0
MIDDLESBROUGH. . 0

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● TICKET arrangements for Tuesday's replay (7.30) are:

100 Club and season ticketholders — vouchers 6 and 31 respectively, from tonight 6—8 o'clock; tomorrow 9.30 a.m.—1.30 p.m.; Monday 9 — noon. Any remaining will be put on general sale on Monday, January 6 from 2—7.